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Arts, Crafts Center offers variety of classes

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Christopher Burnett | Staff Writer

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Dianne Lechner, a recreation assistant at the Arts and Crafts Center, said the monthly painting class is very popular.

“It’s called ‘Cork and Palette’ and it is an acrylic group painting class with all materials provided,” Lechner said. “Each student is encouraged to bring a beverage and any snacks of their choice to share during the class.”

Alishia Adams said she heard about the classes through the various advertisements from the Directorate of Family and Morale, Welfare and Recreation.

“We arrived this past summer, but this is our second time being stationed at Fort Leavenworth. We enjoyed our first assignment here and truly wanted to come back,” said Adams, whose husband is a Marine student in the School of Advanced Military Studies. “My primary expectations of the class are to have fun and maybe create a decent painting.”

Wendy Lewallen said she came to the class with her fellow Marine Corps spouse, Adams, and said it was her very first attempt at painting anything.

“Our primary reasons in attending the class were for the purpose of having fun together while learning to paint,” Lewallen said. “Activities like this are generally always great ways to meet other members of the community as well.”

Instructor Dawn Blankartz said she sought to design an adult-centered art class that would also provide another enjoyable creative outlet for members of the community.

“Bringing art to the lives of people is what I do as an artist and teacher,” Blankartz said. “We designed this for people who would appreciate a creative outlet and have fun participating.”

Blankartz said it is usually a very diverse group of people who attend, and while most students are women, men are also welcome.

“It’s a guided class,” Blankartz said. “We are all painting together at the same time during the class session. I demonstrate techniques and students learn by a follow-the-leader manner in which they are modeling the process I used to create the segments of our subject being painted.”

Blankartz has been teaching on post for five years and also teaches art lessons for children through the Schools of Knowledge, Inspiration, Exploration and Skills Unlimited program.

Megan Pierce said she came to the class with a friend because it looked interesting.

“We came to the class to get out of the house and have some fun on a Friday night,” said Pierce, whose husband is serving in the Army National Guard and attending the Command and General Staff Officer Course. “I’ve never painted before, so this should be really interesting and fun.”

Jennifer Ragsdale, whose husband is also a member of the Army National Guard, said she heard about the class from her village mayor’s post on a community Facebook page.

“I was actually signed up for the (painting) class scheduled for last week that was cancelled due to the ice storm weather forecast,” Ragsdale said. “This is the first painting class I’ve attended at this post, but I have actually painted before.”

In addition to offering framing, stained glass, drawing and painting classes, Lechner said the Arts and Crafts Center has supplies, tools and equipment. There is also a do-it-yourself area where patrons can work on projects themselves. Trained staff are available to assist customers.

“The center’s professional framers can create custom frames for a variety of projects ranging from documents and all types of artwork to needlework,” Lechner said. “Our consignment shop features work by local artisans, as well as limited edition prints, Kansas-related products and seasonal merchandise.”

Jamie Spears, whose husband works at the Mission Command Training Program, said she came to the painting class primarily to socialize.

“It’s just fun to get out of the house sometimes and interact with the other participants in a class like this,” Spears said. “Classes like this are also a good and useful resource. I took painting classes at our last duty station. And, learning to paint is a nice relaxing way to experience positive mental stimulation while having a good time.”



PHOTO/ PRUDENCE SIEBERT, FORT LEAVENWORTH LAMP

Instructor Dawn Blankartz shows Cork and Palette class participants how to add different shades of green to their paintings Jan. 20 at the Arts and Crafts Center. Photo by Prudence Siebert/Fort Leavenworth Lamp

The next Cork and Palette painting class is 7-9 p.m. Feb. 24 at the Arts and Crafts Center, 310 McPherson Ave. The cost for the painting class is \$30. Classes must be paid for in advance. For more information, call 684-3373.

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